

Message Text

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ALSO FOR NRC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG KU

SUBJECT: KUWAIT NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM MOVING FORWARD

REF: (A) KUWAIT 2504 (NOTAL) (B) KUWAIT 1499 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: KUWAIT NUCGSAR ENERGY PROGRAM MOVING FORWARD. MINISTER ELECTRICITY AND WATER HAS VISITED ENGLAND WHERE HE AND UK SCIENCES MINISTER INITIALED AGREEMENT WHEREBY HLB WILL PROVIDE TRAINING AND ADVISORY SERVICES. IN ADDITION IAEA TEAM HAS VISITED KUWAIT AT INVITATION OF GOK. IAEA TEAM CONSIDERED IN GENERAL TERMS TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF GOK NUCLEAR PROGRAM, AND REPORT OFFERS SUGGESTIONS ON HOW GOK MIGHT PROCEED WITH PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

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1. REFTELS REPORTED ON GOK DECISION TO BUILD NUCLEAR TEPLANTS HERE FOR ELECTRIC POWER AND WATER DISTILLATION. RECENTLY GOK MINISTRY ELECTRICITY AND WATER ALGHANIM VISITED UK, AND UK EMBASSY HERE HAS INFORMED US THAT HE AND UK SCIENCE MINISTER INITIALED AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH UK WILL PROVIDE TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR KUWAIT FROM UK ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY.

2. IN THE NEAR FUTURE, FOUR KUWAITIS WILL BE SENT TO HARWELL ON ONE-YEAR STUDY PROGRAM. IN ADDITION, UK EXPECTS TO ADVISE GOK ON HOW TO SET UP ITS PROPOSED NEW NUCLEAR POWER STATION. SEVERAL HARWELL TEAMS UNDOUBTEDLY WILL VISIT KUWAIT OVER NEXT YEAR FOR THIS PURPOSE. INTERESTINGLY, ACCORDING TO UK EMBOFF BRITISH ALREADY HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT GOK BUY A WESTINGHOUSE LIGHT WATER REACTOR AS MOST MEETING KUWAIT REQUIREMENTS. (BRITISH HEAVY WATER REACTORS WOULD NOT PERFORM EFFICIENTLY SINCE THEY WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON SEA WATER FOR COOLING.) FINALLY, THE BRITISH HOPE THAT AGREEMENT EVENTUALLY WILL LEAD TO PROVISION BY UK OF TRAINING REACTOR FOR KUWAIT UNIVERSITY.

3. IN ADDITION TO GOK-HMG DISCUSSIONS, IAEA TEAM VISITED KUWAIT LAST SPRING AT GOK'S INVITATION QUOTE TO HELP IN FORMULATING NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM FROM BOTH TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC POINTS OF VIEW. UNQUOTE. IAEA TEAM'S REPORT IS GENERAL ASSESSMENT AND NOT RPT NOT FULL NUCLEAR POWER PLANNING STUDY. IT PROVIDES ADVICE ON NEAR-TERM ALTERNATIVES.

4. IAEA STUDY, AFTER DISCUSSING LIKELY EXCESS DEMAND FOR NATURAL GAS AND ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGES OF USING GAS OR OIL FOR FUEL RATHER THUC FOR OTHER PURPOSES, CONCLUDES THAT QUOTE THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT INTRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED SERIOUSLY BY KUWAITI AUTHORITIES. UNQUOTE. REPORT THEN RECOMMENDS THAT INDIVIDUAL NUCLEAR POWER PLANNING STUDY FOR KUWAIT BE CARRIED OUT TO DETERMINE BEST SIZE AND COMMISSIONING DATE FOR FIRST COMMERCIAL SIZED NUCLEAR POWER PLANT. THIS STUDY SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY DETAILED TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY STUDIES. IAEA EXPERTS CONCLUDE THAT ANY PROGLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH KUWAIT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT ARE LIKELY TO BE TECHNICAL AND NOT RPT NOT ECONOMIC. STUDY FURTHER CONCLUDES THAT 1986 WOULD BE EARLIEST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DATE FOR COMMISSIONING. IN DISCUSSING ALTERNATIVE SIZES IAEA EXPERTS DO NOT MAKE SINGLE STRONG RECOMMENDATION, NOTING ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF 400MW, 600MW AND 760MW SYSTEMS.

5. IAEA REPORT DISCUSSES WATER DESALTING AND SEVERAL OTHER ASPECTS OF NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM IN KUWAIT AS WELL AS POSSIBLE AREAS WHERE IAEA SERVICES MAY BE AVAILABLE. IN ITS

RECOMMENDATIONS IAEA EXPERTS STRESS NEED FOR GOK TO DEVELOP LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND TO CONCENTRATE ON TRAINING AND MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS. IAEA STUDY, AT REQUEST OF GOK, DISCUSSED, WITHOUT MUCH ENTHUSIASM, 30MW PILOT REACTOR WHICH KUWAITIS BELIEVE COULD BE VERY USEFUL AS A TRAINING DEVICE WHERE INEVITABLE MISTAKES WOULD PROVE LESS COSTLY THAN IF KUWAITIS WENT IMMEDIATELY INTO FULL SIZED REACTOR.

6. COMMENT: BASED ON RECENT CONVERSATION BY CHAGE WITH IAEA REPORT AUTHORS IN VIENNA AND WITH UK EMBOFF HERE, APPEARS THAT GOK INITIATED CONTACTS WITH HMG BEFORE FINAL IAEA REPORT RECEIVED. ON OTHER HAND APPEARS GOK TAKING SERIOUSLY IAEA RECOMMENDATION TO FOCUS SERIOUSLY ON TRAINING AND MANPOWER. WE TOLD FOUR MEW EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN EARMARKED FOR TRAINING AT HARWELL. WE SUSPECT GOK WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH BOTH HMG AND IAEA AND PROBABLY WITH OTHERS AS WELL (E.G. FRENCH AND GERMANS). MOREOVER, AS INDICATED IN REFTELS, GOK OFFICIALS BOTH PUBLICLY AND IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH US HAVE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN COOPERATING WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND BAHRAIN. JUST HOW REGIONAL COOPERATION WILL BE BLENDED INTO KUWAITI DOMESTIC PROGRAM NOT CLEAR, AND WE NOTE THERE VIRTUALLY NO MENTION OF REGIONAL COOPERATION BY EITHER IAEA OR

BRITISH SOURCES IN OUR RECENT CONVERSATIONS.

8. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS US MISSION IAEA PROVIDING DEPARTMENT WITH COPY IAEA REPORT ON KUWAIT.

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